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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

House of LORDS

IN THE

Abbey-Church of WESTMINSTER,

On MONDAY, *June 11. 1739.*

Being the Day of His MAJESTY's
happy Accession to the Throne.

By *ISAAC* Lord Bishop of *St. Asaph.*
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L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN STAGG, in *Westminster-Hall.*

M.DCC.XXXIX.

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*The merciful and gracious Lord
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had in Remembrance.*

THE extraordinary Light, vouchsafed to Mankind by Divine Revelation, was not in the least intended to weaken the Force of any moral Arguments, or draw off the Attention from natural and providential Occurrences, which afford plentiful Matter for Improvement in Knowledge and Virtue. On the contrary, Scripture directs our Thoughts to these instructive Monitors; and both enjoyns and assists religious Observations upon the Works and Ways of God. Besides the natural bad Consequences of neglecting this Study, a peculiar Woe is denounced against the Inattentive, *Who regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the Operation of his Hands*.*

* *Isaiah v. 12.*

THE Frame and Government of the World, and the Dispensations of God's Providence, especially in the more grand Parts, that affect whole States and Kingdoms, demand a most serious Observation; greatly enlarge and improve the Mind, teach Mankind in general their Duty, and shew the wisest and most powerful their necessary Dependence upon the Supreme Disposer, *whose Kingdom ruleth over all.*

GOVERNMENT is so absolutely necessary to the Subsistence of Society, and the Happiness of Man, that the Divine Goodness has been extremely careful, by the Dictates of Reason, and the Instructions of Scripture, to regulate the Exercise of Authority, and enforce the Obedience of Subjects; and to render Men still more attentive, the same useful Lessons are taught by many providential Events.

FAVOURS and Blessings that are past, should not be buried in unthankful Oblivion; but, while it adds to their Happiness, it should increase their Gratitude, when the Mention of a signal Mercy is really describing the present State and Condition of any Community. None of the Kingdoms of the World have had greater Reason, or more frequent Opportunities, than this Nation, to observe the Interposition of Heaven, in a long Series of Events; which

which have happily ended in the Blessings we celebrate upon this Day of Joy and Thanksgiving. No where can it be asserted with more Truth and Justice, that *the merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous Works, that they ought to be had in Remembrance.*

It would be entering upon too large a Field, to go so far back as that great Blessing, the Introduction of Christianity, and the Abolition of those absurd and barbarous Superstitions, which subsisted among an ignorant deluded People. Nor shall I detain this Audience with the happy Deliverance from those ignominious and cruel Ravages, made by Foreign Invaders; or the miserable Confusions and dreadful Havock of Domestic Conflicts and Intestine War, in which this Nation was involv'd, by various Turns: Sometimes in Struggles for Liberty or Power, between the Subject and the Prince; sometimes, still more unhappily for the Public, in Contests between Competitors for the Throne; where one Party, besides the dismal Chances of War and Rapine, must incur the Guilt of Treason, and the victorious Part have the Mortification to see Incroachments made upon the Liberties of their Country, in order to support the Conqueror.

To consider these distant Periods, is for the present too large and extensive a View. Deliverance
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from much later Evils sufficiently illustrate the Divine Goodness to this Kingdom; where in many more recent Instances, God hath so done his marvellous Works that they ought to be had in Remembrance.

'T wou'd be great negligence not to mention one, which was of vast Influence and Importance, the raising up and providentially supporting, thro' a long and glorious Reign, that illustrious Princess, by whose wise and steady Government, the whole Protestant Interest was nurtur'd and defended; happily and prudently establish'd in her own Dominions, and powerfully protected in foreign Countries. Nor is it possible to reflect upon the Reign of this Great Queen, preserv'd by the peculiar Care of Heaven from numberless, wicked and deep-laid Plots and Contrivances, without observing the constant Sense and Judgment of the Popish Faction, extremely well skill'd in the Maxims of this World's Policy; how important to their Interest, it has always been esteem'd, to fix if possible (which God for ever avert!) a Popish Prince upon the Throne of Britain.

To obtain this grand Point, of which they never lose the View, what Dangers have they not encounter'd? What Lives, what Treasure have they spar'd? How often expos'd their best Friends to the utmost

utmost Hazards, and involved many of them in total Ruin? For this, what Plots, what wicked Devices, what execrable Schemes and Machinations have not been contriv'd? One, very extensive indeed, of the most unparallel'd Nature, however denied or disguised at present, then publicly avow'd by the suffering Criminals, sanctified and applauded by the Court of *Rome*, is justly commemorated in our Annals. From all these mischievous Designs we have been happily deliver'd; the watchful Care of God's Providence has set us free. The most subtle and dangerous Snares have been broken, and we have escaped: *All Men that see it shall say this hath God done, for they shall perceive that it is his Work.*

BUT what the utmost Force and Malice of our Enemies could not produce, our own intestine Quarrels too effectually accomplish'd: When in the last Century, after the heavy Calamities of a Civil War and the Murder of a Pious Prince, the goodly Fabrick of a well-fram'd Constitution was entirely pull'd down, and laid in miserable Ruins.

A CATASTROPHE, that will stand as a Proof and Monument at all times, which may perhaps deserve particular Attention in the present, that *the Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water*; an useful Element when preserv'd within due bounds, and confin'd in its proper Channel; but when it

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breaks thro' Banks and Fences, and forces a new Way, like every other Breach of Order, every Violation of the Rules of a good Constitution, tho' the first Eruption is but small and quiet, the Gap is soon enlarged and grows wider ; and as the rushing Torrent increases, 'tis very uncertain, how far the Devastation may spread.

FROM the heavy Calamities of these bad Times, Providence was pleas'd to deliver this Nation, and re-establish our ancient Constitution in Church and State. The more severely the Loss of this Constitution had been felt, the more natural it was for the Joy of the People to rise to an unusual Height upon its welcome Return. Happy for the Nation, that some few great and honest Minds (may every Age mention their Names with Honour!) were calm and thoughtful amidst the general Extravagance; and tho' Friends to the just Prerogatives of the Crown, with great Wisdom prevented Enlargements which might have prov'd fatal to the Liberties of the People; the People at that time, so justly fill'd with Indignation at the ill Effects of the opposite Scheme, and the wicked Behaviour of the Patrons of it; that it cou'd be no wonder, if they thought every thing best, which was most remote from what they really found so bad.

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THUS, illegal Endeavours and unconstitutional Experiments, to cure some Evils, and prevent absolute Power, after having produc'd those very Evils, and introduc'd the most tyrannical Powers, in various, uncouth, temporary Forms, had in the Event of things, well-nigh establish'd unlimited Power in the Crown, for perpetuity. These things happen'd as a Memorial to future Generations, and that we also should remember the things that have come to pass upon the Earth.

THE marvellous Works of Providence end not here. From new Dangers the merciful and gracious Lord wrought out for us new Deliverance. The joyful Spectators of the happy Restoration soon perceiv'd gathering Clouds, that threatned fresh Calamities; and were justly anxious at the beginnings of new Sorrows. Popish Vigilance had corrupted the unhappy exil'd Princes, and rais'd in them strong Aversion to the whole Frame of our Constitution, which was artfully misrepresented as highly injurious to their Royal Father. The last of these Princes determin'd in all events and at all hazards, so powerful is the Operation of Popish Bigotry, to subvert the Protestant Religion, and establish in himself a Power absolute and uncontrollable. The Church of *England* in particular, as the Strength and Glory of the Reformation, was destin'd an early Victim to the

furious Zeal of Popery, in defiance of the greatest Obligations, and most solemn Assurances; for if this chief Obstacle cou'd have been remov'd, the remaining part of their Work, they hoped, wou'd be attended with no great difficulty.

BUT the Divine Goodness once more powerfully interpos'd, and *put a new Song of Praise into our Mouths.* The Friends of Religion and Liberty, whom the gloomy Prospect had caus'd to mourn, were again exalted to Safety; when, *God arose to scatter our Enemies, and disappointed the Devices of the Crafty,* so that their Hands cou'd not perform the Enterprize, their wicked Hearts had cruelly devis'd.

A GREAT, a Glorious Deliverer was rais'd in the Day of Danger, to save this Kingdom, and *Europe* it self from Thralldom, with which the boundless Ambition of one Popish Prince, and the obstinate Bigotry of both, were endeavouring to load the devoted Nations.

IT is but Justice to observe, tho' the Blessings of a free Government can hardly be purchased at too high a Price, that yet the great Expence of Blood and Treasure, some Inconveniences whereof are still felt, consequent upon this happy Event, was really necessary tho' the Revolution had never taken place;
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necessary to restrain the aspiring Attempts of a powerful Prince, then grasping, with great Prospect of Success, at the sole Dominion and universal Monarchy over the West.

BUT in the Disposition of Providence, the violent Attempts to subvert and destroy the Protestant Religion, the Laws and Liberties of a free People, prov'd the Means to establish these Blessings upon a more firm and solid Basis!

IT shou'd not be forgot, that two very pious and excellent Princesses, afterwards renowned Queens, were providentially given in Marriage to Protestant Princes, when a different Alliance must have prov'd greatly detrimental, if not absolutely fatal.

THES E Hopes indeed were cut off, and could only prove the Blessing of a single Age; yet the Divine Goodness ever mindful of us, forgetful as we are of God's many Mercies, has been pleased to establish upon the *British* Throne a Protestant Royal Family. Thus compleating our Happiness, by the desirable Prospect of transmitting this Blessing, and all the consequential Benefits to the latest Posterity.

THOS E restless Spirits, so unfriendly to the Welfare of this Kingdom, who had been labouring
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by Art and Management to defeat the approaching Succession; soon after, when these Devices failed, by raising an unnatural Rebellion in the Bowels of their Country, attempted with open Force and Violence to overturn and destroy the recent Blessing. But neither was this Weapon, so unreasonably formed against our Happiness, allowed to prosper.

THE ardent Wishes, the fervent Prayers, the earnest Endeavours of the best and wisest Men of the last Age; the happy Experience of the present, prove, in the most agreeable manner, the Importance and Value of a legal Government, and a Protestant Prince: A Prince, whose affectionate Concern for preserving our whole Constitution, whose unwearied Regard to the Welfare of his People, add a beneficial Dignity to his Power, and give an amiable Lustre to his Royal Title; willing to sacrifice all the Glories of War, that a trading Nation might, if possible, enjoy the Blessings of constant Peace; but, when necessity requires, and not till then, ready to draw the Sword, to vindicate the Honour and assert the Rights of an injur'd People.

'Tis the common Artifice of designing Men, to draw off the Attention from the present Advantages of a good Constitution, by fanciful Plans of a Form somewhat improv'd, existing merely in Imagination, that might upon experiment not only fail of
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the Benefits expected, but produce Mischiefs unforeseen. Schemes and Projects are endless: No wise Man would give up what is certainly good, for any thing that has the uncertain Appearance of being possibly better.

WERE any of the most judicious of the last Century to become Spectators of the present Times, what Satisfaction would they receive from the Form of Government that now subsists, how earnestly would they recommend a thankful Acquiescence? With great Reason: when Security to the Religion, Laws, and Liberty of this Kingdom is effectually provided and happily experienced? No oppressive Commissions, no illegal Stretches of Power, the doubtful Claims of Prerogative adjusted, the dangerous ones receded from, and given up to the Public Good; when the Laws of the Land are made the Rule of Government, the sole Measure to determine disputed Property, the impartial Arbiters even between the Crown and the Subject; when an excellent Establishment of Religion, so agreeable to the original Constitution of the Christian Church, and so happily adapted to the civil Frame and Polity of the Kingdom, that preserves the desirable Medium between the Confusions of popular Government, and the Oppressions of Tyranny; When this Establishment, agreeably to the gracious Declaration, That the Church of *England* should be the first and
always

always the chief Object of his Majesty's Royal Care, is, by every Instance of kind Regard and Protection, effectually supported and preserv'd : And, what increases the Felicity, this Protection and Support is accomplish'd, as the Church of *England* desires it should be, without any Force or Violence. For, whatever Opinions upon this head might formerly be entertain'd, not peculiar to one Side; it is but Justice now to admit, that tho' supported by the Evidence of Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity, and with the Superiority of a legal Establishment, such is the Christian Temper, the amiable Candour and Condescension of the Church of *England*, she abhors all the Methods of Violence, and all the Influence of Persecution : With other gross Absurdities of Popery, most cordially rejects that cruel Spirit, which spreads Devastation and Misery upon Earth, and calls down Fire from Heaven; *in Meekness instructing those that oppose*, she endeavours their Conviction, pities their Mistakes, but desires not to awaken any Terrors of the Secular Arm.

A PROTESTANT King and Royal Family, a legal Government, Justice duly and impartially administer'd, a well-concerted religious Establishment, with a Toleration to those who prefer a different Form of Worship, are solid Foundations of present Tranquillity and Happiness, and afford the most agreeable Prospect in Futurity. These things hath
God

God wrought for us: And, upon a Review of the various formidable Dangers, to which we have been exposed, the powerful and subtle Enemies, who, with different Appearances, have labour'd at sundry times to deprive us of these Blessings, it would be gross Ingratitude not to acknowledge God's special Goodness. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the Praise! The Lord hath been mindful of us. The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous Works, that they ought to be had in Remembrance.*

TO REMEMBER these Mercies, is to remember the Author and the Importance of them.

IN some Instances indeed, Second Causes, which still are subject to the Direction of Heaven, may have contributed to these beneficial Events; yet in many Cases, it would be great Weakness as well as Ingratitude, not to acknowledge the special Interposition of Providence. *With his own right Hand, and with his holy Arm, hath he gotten himself the Victory. Our Help cometh even from the Lord: The Lord himself is our Keeper.*

THE Remembrance of these happy Occurrences is not a bare Recollection, a mere historical Narration, recounting, tho' with Minuteness, all the Circumstances of the great Events; but remembering,

as we should *remember our Creator*, with grateful Hearts, the Substance and good Effects of these providential Works, the unmerited Clemency which granted the Favours, and the great Obligations to make a thankful Improvement.

'Tis an high and dangerous Act of Ingratitude to neglect and forget Instances of the Divine Care and Goodness. Here even Silence is a Crime. *I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and tell of all thy wondrous Works. Men shall abundantly utter the Memory of thy great Goodness.* But where Oblivion is a Fault, Detraction must be exceeding criminal. To depreciate the Instances of God's Goodness, to misrepresent and pervert the gracious Acts of Providence, is renouncing the Divine Favour; and with most provoking Guilt drawing down heavy Judgements, in the place of Mercies slighted and abused.

THE Benefits of a quiet, regular and legal Government, like the Blessings of Health and Plenty, too often make but feeble Impressions; till by suffering the opposite Calamities, Men learn from the Loss, the true Value of a Gift, which they neglected to observe during the Enjoyment. 'Tis our Interest, as well as Duty, to consider the Ways of God, and with pious Attention meditate upon all his wondrous Works; not only to preserve the Memorial,
but

but perpetuate the Blessings themselves, and transmit the valuable Deposit to future Generations. The Return will prove extremely hurtful, as well as unbecoming, not to endeavour, where there is so much Reason, to fix in the Minds of Men a Sense of God's Providence and Government of the World, that his Eye beholds in the most private Retirement, as his Hand can punish the most powerful Offender. This Persuasion preserves Faithfulness and Truth in the transacting of all public and private Affairs, and most effectually discourages all Immorality and Debauchery, which enfeeble the Spirits, destroy the Honour, and weaken the Power of a Nation. Just Sentiments of Religion not only secure and increase the Happiness of Prosperity, give a Serenity and Firmness in all the Difficulties and Sollicitations of the present State, and open to the Mind sure Prospects of Happiness in Futurity; but are greatly conducive, absolutely necessary, to the lasting Peace and Welfare of Society in general.

EVERY considerate Person must feel a deep Concern in observing, by too many Instances, what increasing Mischiefs arise from the ill-grounded pernicious Inattention to, and Neglect of the great Principles of Religion. I shall mention but two.

ONE is, that Disregard to the solemn Obligation of an Oath, the Force and Influence whereof, can

only be founded upon a Conviction of an Omniscient Judge, arm'd with infinite Power. Perjury is an Evil, a growing Evil, big with innumerable Mischiefs; A public Calamity, that requires most serious Attention, and calls aloud for other Methods of Cure, than barely enacting Penal Laws. Human Laws never reach the most dangerous and hurtful Cases, where no Confutation can arise. These can only be prevented by a just Care to spread, and to support, I was going to say, introduce into the Minds of the People, a real Sense of Religion, an awful Reverence for the great Creator, Governor, and Judge of all Mankind. This, not merely as a Scheme of Policy: For in that low View it must soon cease to operate, and lose all the design'd Effect and Influence.

A SECOND Evil, which springs from the same fruitful Root, is the general Contempt of all Authority, and even of the Laws themselves. The ill-judg'd and very pernicious Diligence that has been employ'd to introduce a Disesteem of the highest Characters, could not have produc'd such bad Effects, if the Minds of Men had not been prepar'd for these noxious Weeds, by a previous Disregard, not only of the Offices of Religion, but of God himself. Nor can it be at all surprizing, that Men should treat a Fellow-Creature, whatever Office he sustains, with great Freedom and Contempt, when by impious Malice

Malice and Folly they have been induc'd to despise the most High God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. The just Connection of these Things, is mark'd out in the sacred Writings : *Fear God ; honour the King.*

WHEN the Necessity of some Rule and Government is admitted, 'tis strangely unaccountable, that the Destruction of all Order and all Authority should besomuch labour'd ; no Dangers apprehended or regarded, but what arise from the untimely Fears of unbounded Power, when the real Danger is, that in the Progress of these subversive and unsocial Measures, no regular Power, no Authority should remain ; while by avoiding suppos'd Inconveniences, certain and immediate Evils are plainly incurr'd. In the Reason of Things, and from the Nature of Society, Reverence as well as Obedience should be paid to Governors. The Holy Scriptures, careful to enjoin every Duty beneficial to Mankind, have strongly bound the important Debt upon us : *Render therefore to all their DUES ; Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour.*

THE Extremes are absurd and dangerous, when on the one hand, such Force is given to Texts requiring Obedience, as would subvert the beautiful Frame of a Legal Constitution, and overturn a free Government ; or, on the other hand, however this
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be overlook'd, when these Commands are left without any Meaning, or Influence; when Deference to Authority and Submission to Superiors are entirely explain'd away and destroy'd.; as if Subjection had never been requir'd *not only for Wrath*, for fear of Punishment, *but also for Conscience sake*: or as if it were a more necessary Duty for the Bulk of Mankind to assume the Seat of Judgment, to censure and condemn; than to discharge the proper Office of Subjects, to reverence and obey.

'Tis possible, Rulers may judge amiss, or act improperly; 'tis possible too those upon lower ground, whose Knowledge of Facts is not so extensive, being mistaken or deceiv'd, may form wrong Conclusions. Governors, no doubt, may sometimes not do so much as they ought; and more may be expected than any Government can possibly perform; more may have been done, than can visibly appear. In all preventive Measures, the more prudently they are concerted, the less apparent will be the Reason of them; for the sooner any Danger is remov'd, the less Evidence there must be of the Reality of its Existence.

GOVERNMENT was not intended to excuse Men from Diligence and Labour, but to encourage and protect them, when well employ'd; *for the Punishment*

nishment of Evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.

WHEN Profuseness and Debauchery, when Extravagance and Luxury, or even when Sloth and Negligence, impair and ruin a Fortune, however the Sufferer may complain that the Times are bad, 'tis more than probable he himself is much worse; and amidst all his Schemes for reforming others, it had been happy for him seriously to have thought of mending his own Conduct.

'Tis perhaps no small Unhappiness, that the general Attention has with great Industry been singly directed and fix'd upon the public Conduct and arduous Matters of State. However properly this may be done, it is far from being the whole Business; other things should not be left undone, but due Care exerted to regulate the Behaviour of Subjects; to imprint a just Sense of Religion; to improve the civil, social, and personal Morals of the People.

NOR will any Endeavours in the upper part of the World prove effectual to engage Deference, Respect and Homage, without taking proper care, upon all occasions, to deserve them. He, that desires others to remember the Dignity of his Character or Office, must never forget the Duties or the Decency of it himself. Magistrates support their own Credit
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and the Honour of Government, by ruling in the Fear of God, promoting his Honour and Glory, who is the Author of all Power; by encouraging the Virtue, and advancing the Happiness of Mankind, for whose benefit that Power was intrusted. *Now these be the last Words of David; David the Son of Jesse said, and the Man who was raised up on high, the Anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue, The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, HE THAT RULETH OVER MEN MUST BE JUST, RULING IN THE FEAR OF GOD.**

By this due Regard to the Author of all our Mercies, and the general Practice of Virtues suitable to different Stations, we shall most acceptably express our Gratitude in the *Beauties of Holiness; We shall become a Praise in the whole Earth; God will delight to do us good, and all Men shall say, Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord, and the People whom he hath chosen for his own Inheritance.*

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

F I N I S.

